

CEREAL HARVEST FORECAST

1958-59

South Australia

Bulletin No. 1 of 1959.

Reports on their harvest prospects have been received from 3,130 farmers representing 39½% of the total area under crop. The estimated acreages and yields set out in this bulletin are based on these reports.

Area under
Grain

The estimated areas under grain for the 1958-59 season are:-

WHEAT	1,374,000	acres
BARLEY	1,245,000	acres
OATS	500,000	acres

Yields

The total yields forecast for 1958-59 are:-

WHEAT	31,500,000	bushels
BARLEY	36,400,000	bushels
OATS	12,000,000	bushels

It is anticipated that for the third successive year the yield of barley will exceed that of wheat although the area sown to barley for grain is still considerably below that planted to wheat for grain. Yields of barley and oats seem certain to be records.

Yields
per Acre Average yields of 22.93, 29.24 and 24.00 bushels per acre for wheat, barley and oats respectively are expected to be obtained.

The mean yields for the same crops for the past 53 years were 11.57, 19.69, and 10.94 respectively.

Better farming methods and less cropping in the drier areas of the State have been important factors in this improvement.

In all cases the estimated yields per acre will, if realised, be the best for over 100 years. Slightly better yields were recorded in 1857/58 for oats, 1856/57 for wheat and 1855/56 for barley when, however, the areas sown to barley and oats were very small and the area sown to wheat for grain totalled only 162,011 acres.

Total Area
Under Crop The estimated total area of wheat, barley and oats for grain, hay and green fodder is 3,542,000 acres compared with 3,557,748 acres actually sown in 1957-58. The combined area has remained fairly constant during the last 14 years. The maximum area was 5,293,862 acres in 1930-31 and the lowest in recent years was 2,538,225 in 1943-44. The areas sown to barley and oats have increased considerably in recent years whilst wheat areas have declined to such an extent that the total area for barley and oats has exceeded that for wheat since 1952-53.

Of the estimated total area of 3,542,000 acres under these crops in 1958-59, 3,119,000 acres are for grain, 196,000 for hay and 227,000 for green fodder.

Rainfall The season opened with an average fall in agricultural areas, for the 3 months April to June of only 3.63 inches, but in the next five months the fall was well above average at 10.36 inches, making the total for the wheat growing period April-November, 13.99 inches. The mean average rainfall in the past 53 years for the wheat growing season was 12.82 in., the lowest recorded being 6.83 inches in 1914 and the highest 19.18 inches in 1916.

(Statistics of rainfall over Agricultural areas have been revised for all years since 1905. The previous method - that of weighting recorded rainfall in a county by the total area of that county - resulted in too much weight being given to the rainfall in counties (mainly dry areas) where only a small acreage was cropped. The new method weights recorded rainfall in counties by the area under crop in that county and gives a better indication of the average rainfall over those portions of the State where

Details for individual crops in the following tables show the forecast for 1958-59 compared with the actual harvests for 1957-58 (a drought year), 1956-57 (a season in which many crop records were broken, and therefore similar to 1958-59) and the 10 years ended 1957-58.

Wheat

Although it is anticipated that the area of wheat for grain will be slightly higher than in 1957-58, this would nevertheless be less than one third of that in 1930-31 (when 4,180,513 acres were planted for grain). However, because of the high average yield expected this season, the estimated yield if realised will be the highest since 1952-53 and approximately 2/3 of the record crop harvested in 1931-32 when 48,093,102 bushels were obtained from 4,071,370 acres.

	Unit	Estimated 1958/59	1957/58	1956/57	Mean 10 years to 1957/58
Total area	Acres	1,436,000	1,411,406	1,480,676	1,734,537
Area for grain	Acres	1,374,000	1,331,302	1,438,289	1,656,014
Yield	Bushels	31,500,000	14,913,988	31,431,547	28,375,181
Yield per acre	Bushels	22.93	11.20	21.85	17.13

Barley

The estimates for 1958-59 show area planted is expected to be slightly above the previous record, and, with the anticipated yield per acre the highest since barley was grown extensively, the total yield forecast (36,400,000 bushels) appears likely to exceed the previous record of 34,002,876 bushels in 1956-57.

	Unit	Estimated 1958/59	1957/58	1956/57	Mean 10 years to 1957/58
Total Area	Acres	1,276,000	1,271,434	1,248,648	984,526
Area for grain	Acres	1,245,000	1,211,762	1,221,737	954,223
Yield	Bushels	36,400,000	17,551,669	34,002,876	20,730,350
Yield per acre	Bushels	29.24	14.48	27.83	21.72

Oats

A record area of oats for grain, 500,000 acres, compared with the previous record of 427,360 acres is predicted for 1958-59. However, total area for all purposes is expected to be only 830,000 acres, somewhat less than the 1957-58 record of 874,908 acres. The estimated yield of grain, 12,000,000 acres, is almost 3½ times the previous year's harvest of 3,422,525, and almost 50% greater than the previous record set in 1956-57.

	Unit	Estimated 1958/59	1957/58	1956/57	Mean 10 years to 1957/58
Total Area	Acres	830,000	874,908	843,481	745,608
Area for grain	Acres	500,000	427,366	427,192	347,555
Yield	Bushels	12,000,000	3,422,525	8,318,296	4,956,213
Yield per acre	Bushels	24.00	8.01	19.47	14.26

Hay

In recent years the area of meadow hay has been increasing, while the area of cereal hay has been decreasing. However this decline in cereal hay has steadied in the past three years. The estimated area for 1958-59 is about the same as the mean for the previous 10 years and with an exceptionally high yield of 1.71 tons per acre expected, the total yield is forecast at 336,000 tons, the highest since 376,593 tons were obtained in 1947-48.

	Unit	Estimated 1958/59	1957/58	1956/57	Mean 10 years to 1957/58
Area (cereal hay)	Acres	196,000	197,871	150,196	196,095
Yield	Tons	336,000	182,606	230,160	257,617
Yield per acre	Tons	1.71	0.92	1.53	1.31

Field Peas

It is estimated that the area planted for grain is 31,000 acres, which is considerably less than the record of 37,168 acres in 1957-58. Total yield is forecast as 550,000 bushels (17.74 bushels per acre), compared with the record harvest of 632,795 bushels (20.75 bushels per acre) in 1956-57. Last season, a large proportion of the crop failed, only 188,376 bushels being obtained from the record acreage.

A.W. BOWDEN,

Deputy Commonwealth Statistician
& Government Statist.

Bureau of Census & Statistics,
68 Grenfell St.,
ADELAIDE.
28th January, 1959.